AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling method wherein a liquid is delivered from a storage tank into a filler tank of a filler, and said liquid is filled into containers by said filler, said method being characterized in that the liquid in said filler tank is returned through a return piping attached to said filler tank and refluxed to said storage tank through a reflux path so that the liquid circulates throughout the entire filling line extending from said storage tank to said filler constantly during both liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling, wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said detecting device, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled).

4. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method wherein a liquid delivered from a storage tank is heat-sterilized before being delivered into a filler tank of a filler, and said liquid is filled into containers by said filler, said method being characterized in that the liquid from said

filler tank is constantly flowing and is variably proportioned between returning through a return piping attached to said filler tank and refluxing to said storage tank through a reflux path so that the liquid circulates throughout the entire filling line extending from said storage tank to said filler, wherein the liquid flowing through said reflux path to said storage tank is cooled below a temperature of the liquid in the filler tank wherein an amount of liquid in the filler tank is detected by means of a detecting device, and at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank is controlled according to a detected value from said detecting device, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

5. (Original) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

6. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein said refluxing is carried out during both liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

Claims 7-8 (Canceled).

9. (Currently Amended) A liquid filling apparatus that fills a liquid into containers, said apparatus including a liquid filling line having a storage tank that stores the liquid and a filler that fills said liquid into the containers, wherein the liquid in a filler tank is returned

through a return piping attached to the filler tank to the entire liquid filling line so that said liquid constantly circulates throughout said liquid filling line, both during liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling, said apparatus further including a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank and a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device, wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

Claims 10-11 (Canceled).

12. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus that fills a liquid into containers, said apparatus including a liquid filling line having a storage tank that stores the liquid, a heat sterilizer that heat-sterilizes said liquid, and a filler that fills said liquid into the containers, wherein at least a portion of the liquid from a filler tank is constantly flowing through return piping attached to said filler tank to the entire liquid filling line so that said liquid circulates throughout the entire liquid filling line, said apparatus further including a cooling device located on said reflux path between the filler tank and the storage tank, wherein the apparatus further including: a detecting device that detects an amount of liquid in said filler tank; and a controller that controls at least one of an amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank and an amount of liquid returned from said filler tank according to a detected value from said detecting device,

wherein during filling by said filler, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is larger than the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank, and during suspension of filling, the amount of liquid supplied to said filler tank is equal to the amount of liquid returned from said filler tank.

13. (Original) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said liquid is a beverage containing a solid component.

14. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said refluxing is carried out during both liquid filling and suspension of liquid filling.

Claims 15-32 (Canceled).

33. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

34. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

35. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

36. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein at least a portion of the liquid in the filler tank is constantly refluxed to the storage tank through the reflux path.

37. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 1, wherein liquid being refluxed to said storage tank egresses from the filler tank through an opening different from the liquid being filled into containers.

38. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling method according to claim 4, wherein liquid being refluxed to said storage tank egresses from the filler tank through an opening different from the liquid being filled into containers.

39. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the filler tank includes at least two different openings such that liquid being refluxed to said storage tank egresses from the filler tank through an opening different from the liquid being filled into containers.

40. (Previously Presented) A liquid filling apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the filler tank includes at least two different openings such that liquid being refluxed to said storage tank egresses from the filler tank through an opening different from the liquid being filled into containers.